Saskatchewan
Labour

Women's Division
1914 Hamilton Street
Regina, Canada, S4P 4V4

TRENDS IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

The women's movement, along with the issues of equal opportunity and equal pay for women, has been around for at least ten years. Equal pay legislation, anti-discrimination laws, maternity leave, day care and affirmative action programs have been established. Women's groups have lobbied for legal backing to pressure employers into alleviating the inequities in the work place.

Other publications of the Women's Division[1] show that women are entering the work force in increasing numbers. The same material shows that the majority of these women have financial responsibilities to meet when they receive their pay cheques and are essentially in the labour force out of financial necessity.

Women are generally employed in clerical, service, nursing, teaching and technical jobs where they are often the lowest paid.

So what kind of progress has been made? What changes can we claim over the last ten, five or even two years?

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Women in the Labour Force

The number of women in the labour force continues to grow. In 1971 in Saskatchewan, 39 percent of adult women aged 15 and over were in the work force.[2] In 1979, this figure rose to 46.5 percent.[3]

Table 1

SASKATCHEWAN LABOUR FORCE

	1971[2]	1979[3]
Total	376,820	433,000
Male	252,235	272,000
Female	124,585	161,000

According to the figures in Table 1, the number of women in the Saskatchewan work force increased by 36,415 between 1971 and 1979. This represents a 29 percent increase. In contrast, the number of men in the work force increased by 19,765 over the same period, an increase of only eight percent. So the participation rate for women is increasing much more rapidly than it is for men.

If one looks at women between the ages of 20 and 54, the participation rate is even higher (Table 2).

Table 2

PARTICIPATION RATE OF WOMEN BY AGE GROUP
SASKATCHEWAN 1971[4] AND 1979[3]

	Percent in Labour Force	
Age	1971	1979
20 - 24	61.0	66.9
25 - 54	46.0	57.9
55 - 64	38.0	34.2
20 - 54	49.0	60.3

In fact, six out of ten women in Saskatchewan between 20 and 54 years of age are in the labour force, an increase of 23 percent in the participation rate since 1971.

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Where are these women going? Are they only getting jobs in the traditional areas of "women's work"? Or, for that matter, are women getting jobs at all?

Many women are not getting jobs or are losing the ones they have. One indication of this is that women are grossly over-represented among the unemployed. Women made up 37 percent of the work force but 50 percent of the unemployed in Saskatchewan in 1979.[3]

If 1977 layoffs in the steel industry are any indication, a higher proportion of women may be affected by layoffs than men.[5] In some cases, women are laid off first because they are the last to be hired. In other cases, different seniority lists exist based on the type of occupation. For example, in the textile industry separate lists might exist for garment workers and packers. Garment workers are most often women and packers are most often men. In order to implement cutbacks, employers may slow down production by laying off more garment workers than packers. Thus, even though women may have more seniority than packers, these women are among the first to be laid off. This type of dual seniority system discriminates and sets women against men. As a result, animosity develops between men and women workers rather than the unity necessary to achieve better working conditions for everyone.

Women's Work

Between 1971 and 1979, the proportion of Saskatchewan women in clerical and service occupations increased 11 and 8 percent respectively (Table 3). In 1979, women made up 83 percent of clerical and 62 percent of service workers. The next highest increase was in sales where the proportion of women increased by nine percent, making up 40 percent of those in the occupation. In managerial occupations, women made up 29 percent, an increase of 12 percent over 1971.

Table 3 shows the proportion of Saskatchewan working women in various occupations. According to these 1979 figures, only four percent of working women were in managerial positions. Ten percent of working women were in the sales area, an increase of two percent since 1971.

Table 3

SASKATCHEWAN LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION AND SEX
1971[6] AND 1979[7]

Occupation	Percentage of Women in Occupation		Percentage of Working Women	
	1971	1979	1971	1979
Managerial	17	29[8]	1	4[8]
Professional	53	56[8]	18	19[8]
Clerical	72	83	23	29
Sales	31	40	8	10
Service	54	62	18	21
Primary occupations	18	18	16	12
Processing	12	*	*	*
Construction	*	*	*	*
Transportation	2	*	*	*
Materials handling and other crafts	7	*	*	*

* not a significant number.
See Canadian figures, Appendix A.

Does the job ghetto still exist? Of all the Saskatchewan women who work, 29 percent are in clerical occupations, 21 percent are in service occupations, 19 percent are in professional occupations (mainly nursing and teaching) and 12 percent are in primary occupations (mining, fishing, forestry and farming). Eighty-one percent of Saskatchewan working women are in these four occupational groups and half work in only two - clerical and service.[9] Obviously the "job ghetto" still does exist.

Women's Wages

Over the years, an effort has been made to obtain equal pay for women. However, these efforts have had little impact on the problem

and the gap between men's and women's wages continues to increase.

There are variations in the forms actual income might take, but one thing is clear; the dollar difference between men's and women's wages is growing.

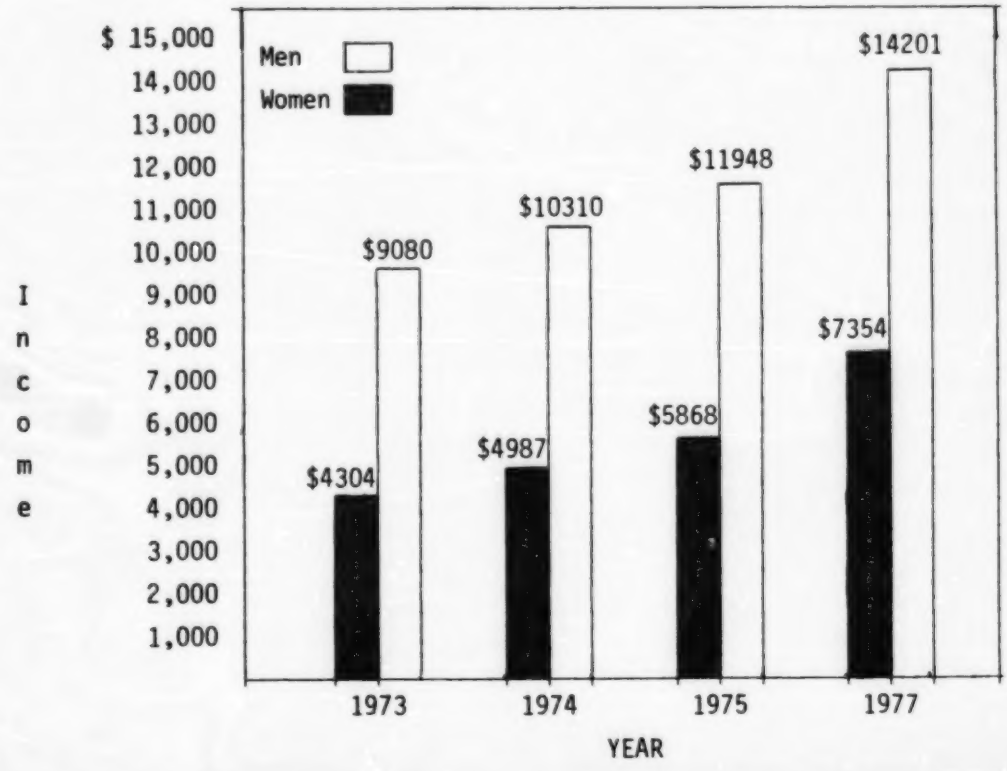
According to Figure 1, the average income of men in Canada increased from $9,080 in 1973 to $14,201 in 1977. Over the same period, the income for women increased from $4,034 to $7,354. The difference in wages for men and women in 1973 was $4,776. By 1977, this difference had reached $6,847, an increase of $2,071 or 43 percent.

While women's wages as a percent of men's wages stay about the same,[10] the gap in wages and subsequently the gap in what those wages can buy grows wider. The living conditions of households headed by women deteriorate and the incentive for women to work at all grows faint.

Figure 1 illustrates the change for the period 1973 to 1977.[11]

Figure 1

AVERAGE INCOME WHERE MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME IS WAGES AND SALARIES, CANADA, 1973 TO 1977



Income of male individuals in Saskatchewan in 1977 was $11,436 compared to $5,267 for women. Saskatchewan women therefore earned 46 percent of what Saskatchewan men earned in 1977.[11]

If we consider the 1977 income of full-time employees in Canada only, i.e. those who worked 50 to 52 weeks, we find that the average income for men was $16,701 compared to $9,715 for women. Full-time female employees therefore earned 58 percent of what full-time male employees earned.[11]

Does Occupation Make Any Difference?

There are differences in the kinds of jobs men and women hold and women tend to be in lower paying clerical and service occupations. This may account for some of the differences in the "average" wage of men and women. So, let's take a look at incomes for men and women by occupation.

According to Table 4, the income of men and women within occupational groups also differs. In both 1972 and 1977, women made no more than 62 percent of that made by men. The dollar differences between men's and women's wages ranged from $2,954 to $6,995 in 1972 and from $4,940 to $9,087 in 1977.

Table 4

AVERAGE INCOME IN CANADA BY OCCUPATION AND SEX
1972 and 1977[11]

	Average Income					
	1972			1977		
Occupation	Men	Women	Dollar Difference	Men	Women	Dollar Difference
Managerial	$13,614	$6,619	$6,995	$21,051	$11,964	$9,087
Professional	11,486	6,291	5,195	18,205	10,491	7,714
Clerical	7,229	4,275	2,954	12,865	7,925	4,940
Sales	9,161	3,175	5,986	14,724	6,389	8,335
Service	6,776	2,506	4,270	11,037	5,156	5,881
Processing	8,185	4,468	3,717	14,098	7,491	6,607
Transport	7,963	3,597	4,366	13,185	7,187	5,998
Fabrication	8,020	3,631	4,389	14,031	6,958	7,073

There are some explanations for the dollar differences between men's and women's wages. For example, in the processing, transport and fabrication industries, women are not well represented and may be new employees compared to many of the men. In the professional category, we know that most of the women are nurses or teachers who are not highly paid professionals. In sales, women are also breaking new ground in such areas as real estate.

But what about managerial and administrative positions where there is less divergency in the kind of jobs one might have? This is where the income data shows the greatest difference, a difference which reached $9,087 in 1977.

Clerical and service occupations are dominated by women, 83 percent and 62 percent respectively (Table 3). These women would have seniority and are presumably well qualified. But again we have a difference in income. In 1977, women in clerical occupations made, on the average, $4,940 less than men in the same occupational group. In service occupations for the same year, women made $5,881 less than men.

Table 5 summarizes the increases in income for men and women from 1972 to 1977 and the increases in the gaps between their incomes for the same occupational groups. Note that in no occupation did the gap in wages go down.

Table 5

INCREASE IN INCOME BY OCCUPATION AND SEX
CANADA 1972 TO 1977

	Increase in Income 1972 to 1977		
Occupation	Men	Women	Increase in Difference
Managerial	$7,437	$5,345	$2,092
Professional	$6,719	$4,200	$2,519
Clerical	$5,636	$3,650	$1,986
Sales	5,563	3,214	2,349
Service	4,261	2,650	1,611
Processing	5,913	3,023	2,890
Transportation	5,222	3,590	1,632
Fabrication	6,011	3,327	2,684
Average	5,845	3,625	2,220

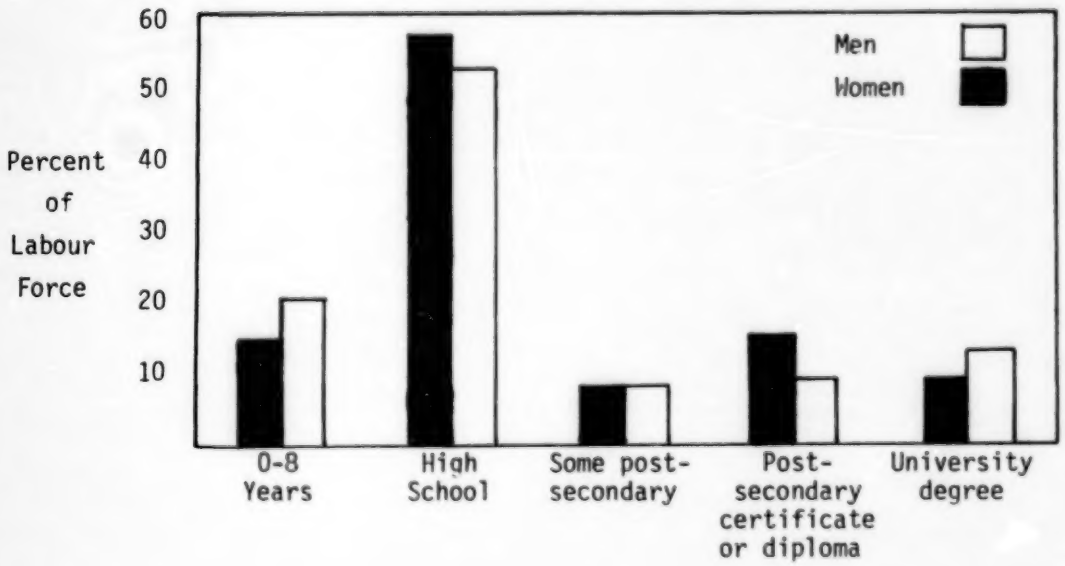
Source: Calculated from data in Table 4.

Education

The argument is often used that the level of education attained by women is much lower than that of men and that this justifies their lower income. Statistics Canada figures show that there is not a large difference in the education level of men and women. A higher percentage of women in the work force have completed high school or hold post-secondary diplomas or certificate.

Figure 2

EDUCATION LEVEL OF MEN AND WOMEN
IN THE LABOUR FORCE, CANADA 1979[3]



These figures also show that the percentage of working men who have grade eight or less exceeds the percentage of working women with the same education by seven percent. The percentage of working men who have a university degree exceeds the percentage of women with degrees by only two percent. The difference in education level between men and women does not appear to be significant.

Women and Unions

General observation shows that unionized employees tend to receive higher wages than non-unionized employees.[12] However, women tend to be in non-unionized places of employment. Only 19 percent of women in the Canadian labour force were members of a union compared to 31 percent for men in 1977.[13]

Is Child Care Adequate?

In a study of day care services for children, Hepworth[14] notes that of those mothers surveyed who would prefer to work, 50 percent of those 20 to 24 years of age and 47 percent of those 25 to 34 years of age cited a lack of satisfactory child care as their reason for not working.

The low wages available to women seem to be a deterrent for women who wish or need to work. In addition, women face the problem of finding someone to care for their children.

Although some of the expense of child care is covered (56 percent of day care spaces and 80 percent of family day care home spaces were subsidized in 1979) the 2,192 day care centre spaces and 876 family day care spaces are far from adequate.[15]

The following table shows the development of day care spaces regulated by the Department of Social Services over the past four years. Excluded from the table are spaces regulated by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. In 1979, their spaces totalled 585[15] and included 235 day care spaces and 350 family day care home spaces. Figures for other years were not readily available.

Table 6

NUMBER OF DAY CARE SPACES BY YEAR IN SASKATCHEWAN[15]

Year	Spaces
1976	1,480
1977	1,955
1978	2,139
1979	2,483*

*Excludes 585 spaces in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan which would increase this total to 3,068 spaces.

In Saskatchewan in 1976, there were 208,300 children under 13 years of age.[16] Of these, 43 percent or 90,000 had working mothers or single parent fathers and of this group, 34,980 were under six years of age. There were 8,640 children with working single parents and 2,710 of these children were under six.[17]

Since there are only 3,000 regulated child care spaces in the province, only three percent of Saskatchewan children under 13 with working mothers or single parent fathers have access to a regulated day care space. There is only one space for every 29 of these children.

In Conclusion

This data has confirmed a number of assumptions about women in the work force. The participation of women in the work force is increasing at a rapid rate. The distribution of women throughout the various occupations has changed due to the increased numbers of women entering the work force. However, the greater increase in terms of representation has been in clerical and service occupations. The gap between men's and women's wages is increasing and the difference cannot be justified in terms of occupation held or level of education. Furthermore, only 19 percent of working women are unionized, which contributes to lower wages for those women who are not in unions.

Much of what has been outlined constitutes deterrents to women entering or staying in the work force:

- A woman cannot afford to work in a low paying job.
- Social attitudes make her feel guilty for holding a job.
- Rules of the market economy generally place her in an unstable job situation and she is among the first hit by layoffs.
- She may face barriers to advancement, bias and sexual harassment.
- She lacks adequate child care either because cost is prohibitive or because there are too few facilities.
- In cases where a pregnant woman has not completed 12 months employment with the same employer, the employer is not legally obligated to give her maternity leave.
- Discrimination in hiring and promotion continues to exist.

Women do have the right to work, be it for economic independence, personal growth or some other reason. While it may be said that a woman has this "right", it remains only in theory as long as there are still blocks to her full participation. With the increasing numbers of women now entering the work force, the voices of complaint regarding these deterrents will continue to be heard.

February 1980

References

1. Saskatchewan Labour, Women's Division, Saskatchewan Women in the Labour Force and Child Care Needs of Working Women.

2. Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue Number 94-277.

3. Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue Number 71-001, December 1979.

4. Statistics Canada, 1971 Census, Catalogue Number 94-704.

5. Women and the New Democratic Party, a report from the federal women's organizer, No. 2, Ottawa, December 1977. NOTE: Of INCO's 180 female mine and smelter workers, 120 (or two-thirds) were laid off. Compare this to the fact that one-fifth of all employees were affected by the layoff.

6. Statistics Canada, 1971 Census, Catalogue Number 94-717.

7. Calculated using base figures from Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue Number 71-001, December 1979.

8. Unpublished distribution from Statistics Canada.

9. The 29 percent of women working in clerical occupations is a drop from the 39 percent reported by Labour Canada, Facts and Figures, 1975. It is possible that as more women enter the labour force the proportion in clerical will go down even though the actual number of women in the occupation increases. Canadian figures (see Appendix A) show an increase in the percent of working women in clerical from 31 percent in 1971 to 33 percent in 1979. This is indicative of the overall picture for the country.

10. Women's wages have usually been reported as a percentage of men's wages. This figure has consistently stayed around 45 to 50 percent. The data reported here, however, shows us that this statistic is not an accurate reflection of what is happening to women's wages and that dollar figures themselves must be examined in order to draw any conclusions.

INDIVIDUAL* INCOME IN CANADA BY SEX
1973 TO 1977[11]

Year	Men	Women	Women as % Men	Dollar Difference
1973	8,410	3,604	42	$4,806
1974	9,749	4,255	43	5,494
1975	10,865	4,788	44	6,077
1976	12,430	5,285	42	7,145
1977	12,698	6,085	48	6,613

* Individual income: a person 15 and over who received money income.

11. Statistics Canada, Income Distribution by Size in Canada, Annual Catalogue Number 13-207.

12. Saskatchewan Labour, Wages and Working Conditions by Occupation, June 1979.

13. Statistics Canada, Corporations and Labour Union Returns Act, Part II, Labour Unions, Catalogue Number 71-202, 1977.

14. Hepworth, H.P., Daycare Services for Children, Personal Social Services in Canada: A Review, Volume 2, Ottawa: The Canadian Council on Social Development, March 1975.

15. Figures obtained from the Day Care Branch, Saskatchewan Social Services; Saskatchewan Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Social Services Branch; and Saskatchewan Social Services Annual Reports.

16. Statistics Canada, 1976 Census, Catalogue Number 92-832, Population by Single Years of Age.

17. Statistics Canada, 1976 Census, unpublished data.

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APPENDIX A

LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION AND SEX
CANADA, 1971 AND 1979

Occupation	Percentage of Women in Occupation		Percentage of Working Women	
	1971	1979	1971	1979
Managerial	15	26	1	5
Professional	48	49	17	18
Clerical	68	77	31	33
Sales	30	40	8	11
Service	46	55	15	18
Primary occupations	16	18	3	3
Processing	17	20	2	8
Construction	*	1	*	*
Transportation	2	5	*	*
Materials handling and other crafts	17	19	1	2

* Less than one percent.

SOURCES: 1971 Census, Catalogue Number 94-717.
Base figures for 1979 from Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue Number 71-001, December 1979.